



(L) New Zealand wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum works on his laptop while (R) Tamim Iqbal (R), Mushfiqur Rahim (C) and Shakib Al Hasan share a joke at the team hotel yesterday.



PHOTOS: STAR

## Still raining

SPORTS REPORTER



The second day's play of the second and final Test between Bangladesh and New Zealand was also washed out yesterday as incessant rain continued under the influence of the depression over the Bay.

With the opening day also lost to rain, it is now uncertain when the match would roll to the ground at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur with forecast of heavy showers till today.

For the second successive day there was no chance to remove the covers rather the showers turned heavier, leaving the ground too sodden and there was no reason for the teams to leave the hotel except a few local players who turned out to have nets at the indoors.

"It's really boring," Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful expressed his frustration.

There was, however, no scope for the umpires -- Australian Daryl Harper and Sri Lankan Asoka Silva -- to remain in the comfort of the hotel as they had to complete the academic job of calling off the day's play.

And Harper confirmed that everybody has to wait until the last

day to know the fate of the Test. "We cannot call the match off totally until the fifth day," said the Australian.

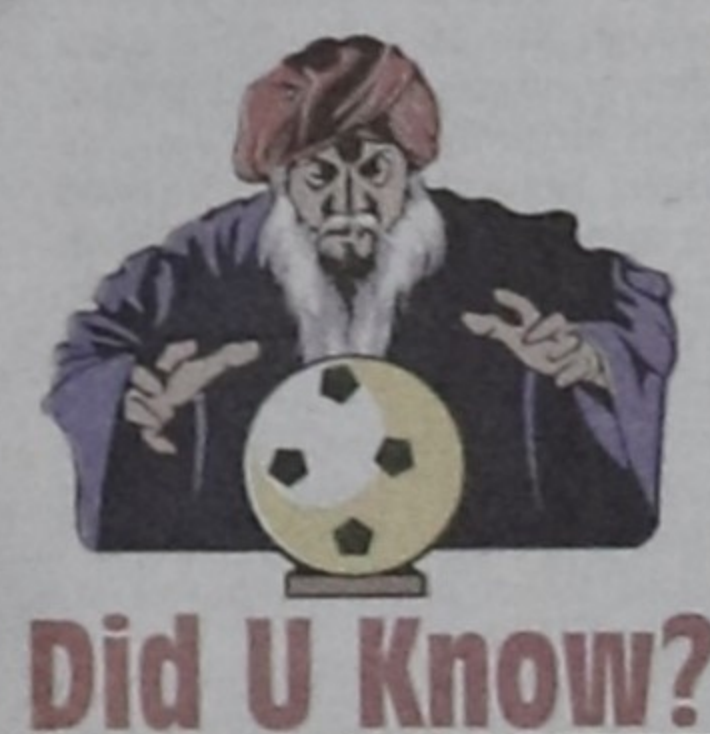
"We were told that there is a depression over the Bay of Bengal, so there is rain and add to that there were soggy conditions, so no play was possible," he added.

With the uncertainty of the start of the second Test, the Tigers' chance to play some good cricket before the next assignment against South Africa is now rapidly running out.

The team management, however, has already shifted their focus on the tough challenge in the South Africa tour with the Rafiqul Alam-led selection panel already deciding about the 15-member squad for next month's trip.

The team is likely to be announced on the fourth day of the second Test. Considering the condition, the selectors chose five pacers while fit-again Rinku Singh is all set to return to the team after missing the two ODIs against Australia and the entire home series against New Zealand due to a thumb injury.

The Tigers will leave Dhaka on November 1 for their second trip to South Africa. During a month-long tour, Ashraful's men will play three one-day internationals and two Tests besides a Twenty20 international against the Proteas.



**Did U Know?**  
John McEnroe and Peter Fleming, both from the USA, won a record seven doubles titles at the ATP Tour Championships between 1978 and 1984.



**Harbhajan Singh**  
(India's star spin bowler)  
"He always changes his mind according to a situation. If Australia is close to a victory he is always going up [appealing], whether it is out or not out. We don't need him to say these things [about Tendulkar] just because he is retired."  
Hitting back at Adam Gilchrist's comments on Sachin Tendulkar.



**BTV**  
Bangladesh v New Zealand  
Second Test, Day Three  
Live from 9:30am  
**ESPN**  
Sportscentre India  
Sports News  
Live at 8:30pm  
**TEN Sports**  
ICL Twenty20  
Mumbai v Dhaka Warriors  
Live from 8:00pm



**Nat'l Cricket League**  
(Four-Day, Day Two)  
Chittagong v Khulna  
Venue: Chittagong Divisional Stadium  
Rajshahi v Dhaka  
Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium  
Barisal v Sylhet  
Venue: Shaheed Chandu Stadium, Bogra

## Matty tempts Zaheer

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Matthew Hayden, Australia's out-of-form opener, wants to continue to test the temperament of Zaheer Khan in the third Test starting Wednesday despite his own struggles against the India fast bowler. Hayden said there was "method behind my madness" in the second innings in Mohali, where he blasted to 29 from 20 balls, as a way of getting on top of Zaheer, who has dismissed him three times in the series.

The Australians feel the aggressive approach, which included Hayden charging the first ball of the innings from Zaheer, has worked already. Zaheer was fined 80 per cent of his match fee for his subsequent wild celebration and dance around Hayden when the batsman was dismissed by Harbhajan Singh in the second innings.

"His temperament, as we saw, it was revealed the other day by his send-off," Hayden said. "He loses

consistency and control when he does do that. It's something that even if I don't do (play aggressively at the start) for the rest of the series, it's something that is in the back of his mind. And I can use that to my advantage."

Hayden has been able to out-muscle Zaheer in limited-overs tournaments, particularly the 2003 World Cup final, but he has failed to assert himself on this trip. Zaheer removed Hayden for 0, 13 and 0 in his first three innings of the tour before the brief explosion last week.

"Zaheer Khan has been put under pressure a lot by myself and (Adam Gilchrist) in all the tournaments we've played in one-dayers," Hayden said. "I've also tried to emulate that when we've played Tests. I just feel like he's vulnerable when he's like that. Hayden is a target for the Indians and his lean spell is one of the key reasons Australia will start from a 1-0 deficit in Delhi. He will continue to employ "positive intent" with his batting, mainly because India's influence on the second Test, which the home

side won by 320 runs, weakened slightly in the second innings before they recovered and Australia collapsed to 58 for 5.

"We saw straight away when that happened, there were blokes going in every direction in the outfield," he said. "I guess the challenge then put on me is how do I handle it? If I get through that stage, I have to handle the next phase, then mark that as an opportunity to work and manipulate the ball around."

Hayden has devised a strategy for exiting his bad patch and coping with the changing nature of an innings in India. He stayed at the team hotel in Delhi instead of travelling during the three-day break and focussed on his determination to "bat long".

"There are three unique stages of the game here that I have had a bit more of a think about," he said. "If you watch the way Virender Sehwag goes about his cricket, or any of them go about their cricket, the new ball is there to be hit. With the flatter ball, from 15 overs to 50

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## Reds fell Blues at home

AFP, London



Liverpool shattered Chelsea's 8-6 match unbeaten run at Stamford Bridge and laid down a significant marker in the title race as Xavi Alonso's strike clinched a 1-0 win on Sunday.

Four and a half years had passed since Arsenal were the last team to beat Chelsea in front of their own fans in the Premier League, but Alonso ended that impressive record with a 10th minute shot that deflected home off Jose Bosingwa.

As if that wasn't bad enough for Chelsea, they also had to surrender first place in the table to Liverpool, as well as losing their unbeaten record in all competitions this season.

Alonso's goal owed more than a little to good fortune but Liverpool were worthy winners for the kind of disciplined and determined display that bore the hallmark of serious title contenders.

Chelsea had been regarded as the main threat to Manchester United's two-year dominance of the title, but Liverpool have beaten both their main rivals already and are clearly in the mood to end their 18-year wait for an English championship.

Talk of a sustained challenge from Liverpool has been growing by the week as the Reds compiled their best start to a Premier League campaign.

But this was the acid test of their credentials. Liverpool had never won at Chelsea during Benitez's four-year reign - and had only been

successful there once in 19 years - so victory would be a major statement of intent.

Their cause wasn't helped by the absence of injured star Fernando Torres, but Benitez's team showed no signs of any inferiority complex and met Chelsea head on in every bone-jarring tackle in the early skirmishes.

With their desire well established, Liverpool snatched the lead in the 10th minute.

Dirk Kuyt flicked on a long throw and John Terry could only head weakly to the edge of the box, where Alonso dove in a shot that struck Bosingwa and deflected past wrong-footed keeper Petr Cech.

Salomon Kalou had a chance to level minutes later when referee Howard Webb waved play on after

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Liverpool midfielder Xavi Alonso (L) celebrates with teammate Robbie Keane (R) after scoring the all-important goal against Chelsea during their Premier League match at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

## No play in NCL

SPORTS REPORTER

No play was possible on the first day of the third round Ispahani Mirzapore Tea 10th National Cricket League at different venues across the country yesterday due to inclement weather following a depression over the Bay of Bengal.

It is unlikely to see any action on the second day as there is weather forecast of further rain for the next couple of days in the capital and elsewhere.

In the third round, league leaders Rajshahi take on Dhaka at Rajshahi Divisional Stadium, defending champions Khulna meet Chittagong at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium and Barisal face Sylhet at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra.

## No matches in school football

SPORTS REPORTER

The Dhaka Metropolitan Women's School football tournament matches on yesterday were postponed due to incessant rain.

The organisers, despite forecast of heavier rains and inclement weather, are still hoping to hold today's matches as they are pressed for time.

The tournament final is slated for November 1 and the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is determined to stick to the deadline as the students will have to take preparation for the exams.

Yesterday's matches have been revised for October 29 and weather permitting, today's matches -- BIT v Rajshahi, Scholastica v Siddheshwari and AIS v Natun Kuri -- will be held on schedule.

## Double delight for Sunnydale

SPORTS REPORTER

Sunnydale clinched both boys' and girls' titles in the Sunnydale under-14 basketball tournament which concluded at the Dhanmondi Gymnasium yesterday.

The boys recorded a hard fought win when they edged Green Herald 25-24 while Sunnydale girls were also stretched before beating Sunbeams 11-9.

Umma Jillo of Sunbeams (girls) and Eusha Mohon (boys) of Sunnydale were adjudged best players.

## Kenya final washed out

AFP, Nairobi

Heavy rain washed away the final of the Nairobi Tri-Series between hosts Kenya and Zimbabwe here on Saturday.

It was the fourth consecutive game scheduled for the Nairobi Gymkhana ground to be washed out without a ball being bowled.

Overnight rain had delayed the planned 9.30am start and then the outfield failed to dry despite the sunshine. Play was officially called off an hour later with the teams sharing trophy.

Only three matches were possible in the tournament, with each team winning a game. Ireland failed to make the final on the basis of net run-rate.

## Dilemma over Mishra

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

India's new bowling star Amit Mishra is sweating on selection for the third Test against Australia -- despite a match-winning seven-wicket haul against the tourists.

The 25-year-old was picked for the second Test in Mohali as a last-minute replacement for injured Indian leg-spin veteran Anil Kumble and tied the Australians in knots with his enormous leg-breaks and the odd googly.

The debutante's seven wickets helped India to a thumping 320-run win, and the Australians are desperate to avoid a repeat in this week's New Delhi Test.

But they may receive help from the Indian selectors, who face a tricky selection dilemma for the third Test of the Border-Gavaskar series beginning here on Wednesday, with Kumble raring to play on his favourite surface.

The inspirational Indian skipper became only the second bowler to take all 10 wickets in a Test innings after England's Jim Laker at the Feroz Shah Kotla stadium here in 1999.

And he has 55 wickets at a rate of just 15.41 in six Tests at the venue.

The 38-year-old's injured shoulder is improving rapidly and he is keen to lead India again with time running out of his career spanning 18 years and 131 Tests.

But former Australian Test captain Ian Chappell believes Mishra should be given the nod over Kumble.

"Mishra is a talented leg spinner. His control and variety confused the Australians in the Mohali game," he wrote in his Cricinfo column, adding that going back to Kumble would be a step backwards for India.

Australian vice-captain Michael Clarke said whoever was selected would be a challenge as the tourists seek to battle their way back into the four-Test series, in which they trail 1-0.

"They are two very different bowlers but Anil has been fantastic

for India for a long time," he said.

"I would imagine if he is fit he will be back in the team in Delhi and the youngster is just going to have to wait until Anil gets injured again, retires, whatever he decides to do."

"Whoever they pick, we know we are going to have to bat well against them."

Mahendra Dhoni, who stood in as captain for Kumble in the Mohali Test, kept his cards close to his chest although he was full of praise for the youngster, who has played in three one-day internationals.

"I believe in him (Mishra) as I

believe in every guy in the squad," he said.

"It's not fair to doubt anyone. He may not have 500-600 wickets but he has loads of wickets (310) in domestic cricket. He is different from other bowlers in that he flights the ball but is not quick in the air."

"You have to use your feet against him because his googly and slider can really fool the batsman."

With such a selection dilemma on their hands, India may well keep the Australians guessing until the captains come out for the toss on Wednesday morning.



India leg-spinner Amit Mishra bowls in the nets as Anil Kumble looks on during a training session at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground in New Delhi on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

## 'Don't go back to Shane'

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

England captain Kevin Pietersen believes Australia would be taking a "backwards step" if they were to call Shane Warne out of retirement in time for next year's Ashes.

Australia have been short of options in the spin department since Warne, Stuart MacGill and Brad Hogg all retired in the last 18 months.

Cameron White played his first two Tests on Australia's current tour of India having only been called into the squad as a late replacement for the uncapped 36-year-old Bryce McGain.

Australia's recent defeat to India in Mohali has led to speculation their dominance could be on the wane.

Warne, whose only cricketing commitment at present is the Indian Premier League, recently

said he was fitter than ever and would consider a comeback if the call ever came through from Australia captain Ricky Ponting.

Pietersen said: "I've already had a text from him saying he might play in it next year."

"If he does I think it will be a real backwards step for Australia. If they did decide to pull somebody out it would show how much it did mean to Australia, certainly."

"There is still a long way to go before we play them and there is room for improvement -- but they certainly aren't the team they were when we played against them last year. Definitely not."

"They took Test cricket to a new level with the side that they had and absolutely hammered us. They really hurt us."

"But the side that is playing for Australia now is certainly not the one we played against two years ago."

"They don't have Glenn McGrath they don't have Adam

Gilchrist they are missing some pretty dangerous players. They are missing Justin Langer at the top of the order."

Warne took 40 wickets in the 2005 Ashes series but Pietersen insists England would not be fazed if he was to pull on the baggy green again.

"To be honest it really doesn't matter if he plays or not. I don't have a problem with it and our guys play Shane pretty well. I enjoy facing Shane," said Pietersen.

Pietersen is currently in Antigua with England's limited overs squad preparing for next Saturday's Stanford Challenge.

England then travel to India and the West Indies before the 2009 Ashes summer gets underway.

Pietersen wants to tackle Australia on the back of successive series victories, as they did with such success in 2005.

"We have a very important next few months," he said.